

Municipal Funding for Land Conservation

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Land Conservation: A Growing Trend

- ❖ 1.3 million acres protected in New Hampshire since 1901
- ❖ New Hampshire has 50 land trusts and over 200 Conservation Commissions
- ❖ In 2001, nationwide, more than 137 land conservation measures passed, totaling \$1.7 billion
- ❖ Between 2001 and 2003 New Hampshire towns committed over \$71.7 million for land protection

Who Cares About Land Conservation in New Hampshire?





What Are They Doing About It?

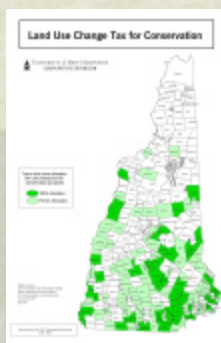
- ❖ Renewed interest in civic involvement
- ❖ Working harder than ever at land use planning
- ❖ Initiating New Land Conservation Strategies

Towns Are Spending Money on Conservation

- ❖ Land Use Change Tax
- ❖ Timber Harvest Tax
- ❖ One Time Appropriations for Single Parcels
- ❖ Bonds for Individual Parcels
- ❖ Bonds for Non-Specific Open Space

Land Use Change Tax

- ❖ 127 towns statewide (54%)
 - 33 estuaries area towns (79%)
- ❖ 5% - 100% of LUCT statewide
 - 10 - 100% in estuaries area
- ❖ \$5,811,274 statewide in 2000



Timber Harvest Tax

- ❖ A few towns with managed town forests choose to put the income from planned timber harvests into acquiring more town forest land.



One Time Appropriations for Single Parcels

Barrington, 2001, \$75,000 toward Calef lot

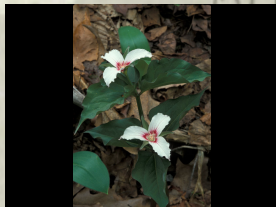
- ❖
- ❖ Fitzwilliam, 2002, \$50,000 to acquire 157 acres of town conservation land

Bonds for Individual Properties

- ❖ Bedford, 2001, \$3,600,000 for Joppa Hill Farm
- ❖ Amherst, 2002, \$442,000 for the part of Joppa Hill Farm in Amherst
- ❖ Newington, 2003, \$500,000 for conservation easement on the Frink Farm

Bonds for Non-Specific Open Space

- ❖ A brand new trend, initiated in 2001 and growing in popularity every year since then



For more information about these and other funding strategies for land conservation, see

Saving Special Places: Community Funding for Land Conservation

<http://www.spnhf.org/explor/library/Research/savingplaces.pdf>

When Did They Do That?

- ❖ Land Use Change Tax since 1989
- ❖ Appropriations and Bonds for Specific Properties - since early 1900s
- ❖ Bonds for General Open Space Acquisition
 - 2001 - 2003 and forward

Where?

❖ 2001 Bond Towns

- North Hampton	\$4,000,000
- Hollis	\$2,000,000
- Chester	\$3,000,000

2002 Bond Towns

Brookline	\$1,000,000
- Hollis	\$3,500,000
- Londonderry	\$1,000,000
- Merrimack	\$4,200,000
- Newfields	\$2,000,000
- Newmarket	\$2,000,000
- Stratham	\$5,000,000

2003 Bond Towns

Auburn	\$2,000,000
- Brentwood	\$2,000,000
- Dover	\$1,000,000
- Durham	\$2,500,000
- East Kingston	\$4,000,000
- Exeter	\$3,000,000
- Hollis	\$5,000,000
- Hopkinton	\$5,000,000
- Londonderry	\$4,000,000
- New Castle	\$ 500,000
- Rye	\$5,000,000

Why?

❖ Reasons to Conserve Open Space

- To retain community character

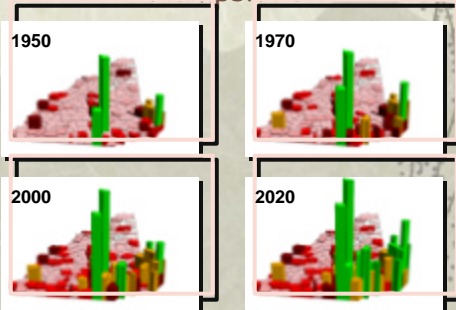
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Why

❖ Reasons to Conserve Open Space

- To retain community character
- To buffer the impact of population growth and development

Population Growth in New Hampshire

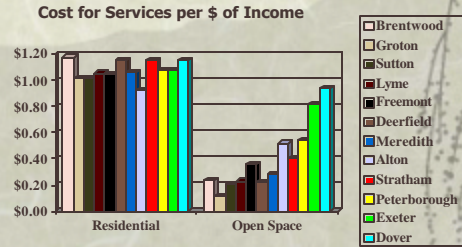


Why

❖ Reasons to Conserve Open Space

- To retain community character
- To buffer the impact of population growth and development
- **To save towns money**

Cost of Community Services Studies



Why

❖ Reasons to Conserve Open Space

- To retain community character
- To buffer the impact of population growth and development
- To save towns money
- **To leverage new matching funds**

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Economy and Jobs

❖ Open Space Land Uses in New Hampshire

- Employ 16% of our workers
- Constitute 25% of the gross state product
- Pay 35% of state and local taxes

How Did They Do That?

- ❖ Every bond passage requires a ballot vote at town meeting and must pass by 2/3 or 3/5 majority



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North Hampton's Successes

- ❖ North Hampton Forever Initiative
 - Town-created committee
 - Education efforts
 - PowerPoint presentation to town groups
 - Series of six informative newsletters sent to every resident
 - Sharing what they learned with other towns

Chester's Successes 1997 - 2002

- ❖ 642 acres conserved
 - 12 conservation easements
 - 2 properties
- ❖ \$4,128,500 spent
 - \$230,000 outside grant money leveraged

Green's Pond, Merrimack



Green's Pond, Merrimack

- ❖ In 1979, town meeting passed a warrant article to purchase property for \$1 million, but Selectmen never did
- ❖ In 2001, budgetary town meeting zeroed out petitioned article to purchase property
- ❖ In 2002, town voted to bond \$4.2 million for acquisition of 563-acre Greens Pond parcel

Merrimack Bond Outcome

- ❖ Bond passed with 66.9% of the vote, just above the necessary 2/3
- ❖ Board of Selectmen rejected two grants because of restrictions
- ❖ Future use of property undetermined; master plan committee working on proposal

Stratham, Our Town

- ❖ **Community Organizing 101**
 - Engage community opinion leaders
 - Newsletters similar to North Hampton
 - Information sessions for Selectmen and other groups
 - Get out the vote through
 - Flyers
 - Canvassing neighborhoods
 - Telephone tree to supporters

Stratham, Our Town

- ❖ **Results of Community Organizing**
 - Largest town meeting turn out ever
 - 88% in support of \$5,000,000 bond

Brentwood

- ❖ **Community Leadership and Cooperation**
 - Focused on issues relevant to their own town
 - Open space supporter and budget committee chair cooperated on cost of community services study "Does Open Space Pay in Brentwood?"
 - Worked to include all concerns about future land use issues in town
- ❖ **Bond Passed 289 to 64**

Exeter, A Special Place

- ❖ **Grant funding for public education campaign**
 - From Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation and New England Grassroots Environmental Fund
 - Created newsletters, bumper stickers, buttons, posters, fliers
- ❖ **Bond passed 2474 to 894**

New Castle

- May 2003 town meeting passed bond for \$500,000 for open space
- Did not conduct vote by ballot vote, so outcome was determined to be invalid
- Plan to try again next year

Lesson to be Learned from New Castle's Experience

Be sure to understand and follow all correct procedures and deadlines that pertain to your town's form of government

Hollis Annual Bond Reauthorization

- ❖ Each bond that has passed (2001 - 2003) is for only whatever projects can be accomplished in that year with the amount of money authorized.
- ❖ Citizens vote on each parcel.

2004 Bonding Prospects

- ❖ At least 10 towns are currently exploring bond proposals for the upcoming town meeting season.

Special Opportunities in Towns with Funds for Open Space

- ❖ Shared vision for future of town
 - Land use planning and open space conservation efforts conducted cooperatively

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Special Opportunities in Towns with Funds for Open Space

- ❖ Acquire and use sophisticated natural resource information
 - Geographic Information System

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Special Opportunities in Towns with Funds for Open Space

- ❖ Work with Land Trusts
 - Land trusts have expertise in conservation land transactions, especially conservation easements

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Land Trusts in New Hampshire Estuaries Area

- ❖ Bear-Paw Regional Greenways
- ❖ Moose Mountains Regional Greenways
- ❖ Rockingham Land Trust
- ❖ Seacoast Land Trust
- ❖ Strafford Rivers Conservancy

New Funding for Open Space Is an
Opportunity to Retain What We Love
About Our State

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